

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

*It has been rightly said that the psalms are “a school of prayer.”
They not only provide us with models to follow, but inspire us to
voice our own deepest feelings and aspirations.*

Psalm 23

God’s loving care for the psalmist is portrayed under the figures of a shepherd for the flock (1 - 4) and a host’s generosity toward a guest (5 - 6). The imagery of both sections is drawn from traditions of the exodus (Isaiah 40: 11; 40: 10; Jeremiah 31:10).

Psalm 27

Tradition has handed down the two sections of the psalm (1 - 6) and 7 - 14) as one psalm, though each part could be understood as complete in itself. Asserting boundless hope that God will bring rescue (1 - 3), the psalmist longs for the presence of God in the temple, protection from all enemies (4 - 6). In part B there is a clear shift in tone (7 - 12); the climax of the poem comes with “I believe” (13), echoing “I trust” (3).

Psalm 117

This shortest of hymns calls on the nations to acknowledge God’s supremacy. The supremacy of Israel’s God has been demonstrated to them by the people’s secure existence, which is owed entirely to God’s gracious fidelity.

